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MN970465: Naval Hospital Corpus Christi Teams Up With Local Hospital
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX -- Navy patients typically have their surgery
performed at a Navy hospital by Navy physicians or sometimes at a
civilian hospital off-base where a civilian doctor performs the
surgery. But Naval Hospital (NH) Corpus Christi is trying something
different.

A resource-sharing agreement between the Navy and Spohn Health
Care System is bringing Navy patients and their doctors to the
operating rooms at Spohn South, a civilian hospital within a few miles
of Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.

"This is a unique arrangement," said CAPT Nancy Lescavage, NC,
commanding officer at NH Corpus Christi. "And it is proving to be a
win-win situation because everyone benefits from it."

Spohn South is a large, modern full-service hospital that has an
intensive care unit, unlike the naval hospital. The 23-year old naval
hospital was originally designed to provide health care for a much
larger military population than exists today in the Corpus Christi
area.

Both Spohn South and the NH Corpus Christi are enthusiastic
about the relationship. For Spohn South, the resource-sharing
agreement offers them better utilization of their surgical equipment
and facilities, and it keeps the staff busy. For the Navy, the
agreement will result in more cost-effective care for naval personnel.

"This agreement with Spohn has truly benefited not only the

patients but also the surgeons," according to LCDR Frank K. Kuwamura, MC, Orthopedic Surgeon at NH Corpus Christi. "We are now able to provide state of the art comprehensive orthopedic care for our beneficiaries. Spohn South's facility, with an intensive care unit (ICU) and designated orthopedic trained assistants, allows us to broaden our scope of surgeries which we are able to perform. The opportunity lets me keep the skills the Navy has taught me, current," said Kuwamura.

Not only are the skills of the surgeon kept sharp, but also the skills of the Navy anesthesiologist, nurse anesthetists, and the enlisted hospital corpsmen who are part of the operating room staff. The agreement gives the operating staff the opportunity to hone their skills--skills that are critical on the battlefield.

CAPT Rahmat Seif, MC, a general surgeon at NH Corpus Christi, who joined the Navy seven years ago after 20 years of private practice, said he enjoys working at the civilian hospital because for him it is the best of both worlds.

"It takes more than a surgeon to perform surgery," said Seif. "It takes a full-fledged facility with the proper equipment and the proper staff."

"I have a high-quality staff that is with me all the time - whether we are seeing patients at the Naval Hospital - or at the operating room at Spohn South," said Seif.

The patients benefit from the agreement as well.

BM2 William East, who is assigned to Training Squadron 31 at NAS Corpus Christi, had surgery at the naval hospital about 18 months ago on his shoulder. East recently had ankle surgery at Spohn South, by a Navy Orthopedic Surgeon, and he described the whole experience as better at Spohn South.

The biggest difference for East was the "little things."

"At Spohn, I had my own individual room with a TV, a telephone, and a recliner," said East as he described his hospital room. Although East admits he wasn't able to relax in the recliner prior to surgery, the recliner was comforting.

So far Navy surgeons have performed about 77 surgeries at Spohn South, and by all accounts the resource-sharing agreement is proving to be a great success.

by LT Edie Rosenthal, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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MN970466: TRICARE Service Centers Have The Answers

Got questions about TRICARE? TRICARE Service Centers have the answers.

Each TRICARE region is served by one or more TRICARE Service Centers. These facilities are there to help beneficiaries get the health care that they need and are staffed by health care professionals. All persons eligible for military health care, including those now using Medicare, can receive assistance from the TRICARE Service Center. Here's what a typical TRICARE Service Center includes:

Beneficiary Services Representative. These health care professionals, usually nurses or physicians' assistants, can help explain the health care options available to you and assist in your choice of the program that suits you best. Beneficiary Services

Representatives can help you enroll in TRICARE Prime and assist with the selection of a Primary Care Manager.

Health Care Finder. In addition to making appointments, Health Care Finders can help you find the care that you need. They coordinate with your Primary Care Manager to help locate your specialty care. They will also assist in finding physicians and specialists who will accept TRICARE Standard payment for service, thus avoiding additional charges from doctors' fees that are above the approved amount. Health Care Finder can provide a list of doctors participating in the TRICARE Extra network, and they help locate doctors who accept Medicare payments for service.

For assistance in locating your local TRICARE Service Center contact your TRICARE regional offices.

Southeast Region - (South Carolina, Georgia and Eastern Florida) - (800) 444-5445.

Gulfsouth Region - (Florida Panhandle, eastern Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, small area of Arkansas, and Tennessee) - (800) 444-5445.

Southwest Region - (western Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and most of Texas) - (800) 406-2832.

Desert States Region - (Western Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada) - (888) T-R-I-W-E-S-T or 874-9378.

North Central Region - (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, most of Idaho, Utah and Kansas) - (888) T-R-I-W-E-S-T or 874-9378.

Region 9 - (Southern California, Yuma and Arizona) - (800) 242-6788.

Golden Gate Region - (Northern California) - (800) 242-6788.

Northwest Region - (Washington, Western Idaho and Oregon) - (800) 982-0032.

Hawaii/Pacific Region - (Hawaii) - (800) 242-6788.

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MN970467: Pharmacists Tell All

SAN DIEGO, CA - Naval Medical Center San Diego would like to change the way some people take their medications.

Make that several million people.

That's because, according to the experts, of the 2.3 billion prescriptions filled each year in the U.S., half are not taken properly. This misuse of prescription drugs in the U.S., they say, translates to \$100 billion a year in extra costs related to increased hospital and nursing home admissions, lost productivity and premature deaths.

In observance of National Pharmacy Week, Naval Medical Center San Diego held a "brown bag" review. The pharmacy staff at the medical center were on hand to educate people in the art of taking medications.

"The purpose of observing National Pharmacy Week," said LTJG Jennifer Scheuer, "was to inform the staff, patients and visitors of the services provided by the pharmacy department other than the usual dispensing of prescriptions."

LTJG Michelle Brown and Scheuer, staff pharmacists, coordinated the event at the medical center.

Poster displays featured information on the center's discharge pharmacy, primary care pharmacy, the Coumadin clinic for cancer patients, and Autoscript, the pharmacy's robot.

Tours were also available to provide an up close look at how the medical center's pharmacy operates.

"The brown bag medicine review encouraged patients to bring in all the medicines from their homes, including over the counter medications and prescriptions drugs. They could then review all of these medications with a pharmacist," said Scheuer. Pharmacists were then able to explain what each medication is used for and how it should be taken.

Scheuer said they were also able to screen for potential drug interactions and encourage people to discard any drugs that they are no longer taking or those that were expired.

New ways of getting prescriptions filled was also explained. "Patients are able to call their refills in either by leaving a message or using a touch tone phone. Their order is processed and then passed on to Autoscript," Scheuer said.

Autoscript is a robotic device that automatically locates, fills and labels prescription orders for 300 of the most commonly used medications.

Using robotics for prescription filling frees staff members to provide more patient education and counseling as well as faster customer service.

Visitors to the pharmacy fair were also given blood pressure and blood glucose readings. Those with abnormal readings were advised to have a repeat reading in a few days and to see their physicians.

Though the medical center's Pharmacy Department wasn't able to reach all of the million plus people in the U.S. who misuse their prescriptions each year, those who visited the medical center last week are now on the right track.

By JO1 Joe Parker, Naval Station San Diego

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MN970468: Go Navy, Beat Army

NEW YORK, NY -- This year's Army-Navy game is approaching fast. Scheduled for December 6 at the Meadowlands Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, this traditional football game offers an exciting opportunity for our Sailors and Marines to display their team spirit before millions of Americans. CBS sports will be televising the game and has requested "Go Navy, Beat Army!" video spots from the Navy/Marine Corps for broadcast during the game.

Enthusiasm, imagination and creativity are the keys to getting your spot used. The video message should include: group's identity, command, location, "Go Navy" and/or "Beat Army" cheer. Avoid use of jargon or acronyms. For example, "From the flight deck of USS NIMITZ, forward deployed in the Arabian Gulf, go Navy! Beat Army!"

Spots should be 10 to 15 minutes in length and have good

broadcast and audio quality. Betacam, Beta SP or three quarter inch tapes are preferred. Submissions recorded on VHS will not be used. Greetings should be videotaped outdoors where possible, and the setting should be indicative of command location and mission, for instance, the deck of a ship or on a pier in front of a ship.

Proper appearance in uniform is paramount. No sunglasses.

CBS will not edit submissions. All submission should be ready-to-air spots. Navy Office of Information East, New York will deliver tapes to CBS. Tapes must be received no later than November 24. For questions call (212)801-0031.

Send original, broadcast quality footage express mail or fastest method available to Navy Office of Information - East, 605 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, New York 10158-0180.

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MN970469: TRICARE Question and Answer

Question: Can I change among the three TRICARE options?

Answer: If you are on active duty, you automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime. Active duty family members, retirees (under the age of 65) and their family members (under the age of 65) have a choice. Enrolling in TRICARE Prime is usually the least expensive and best option. Enrollment occurs every twelve months. However, you may choose to disenroll at any time within the twelve month window. Enrollment and disenrollment is coordinated by your local TRICARE Service Center. If you are enrolled in TRICARE Prime you are no longer eligible for TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Standard. Once enrolled in TRICARE Prime you will obtain all of your care through your Primary Care Manager or other network physicians to whom you are referred by your Primary Care Manager. Use of a non-network provider for non-emergent care will trigger what is known as the TRICARE Point-of-Service option. This option requires payment of an annual deductible of \$300 for an individual enrollee or \$600 per family, plus 50% of the allowable charges. Participation in TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Standard does not require enrollment, and your TRICARE Service Center can assist you in making these choices.

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MN970470: Healthwatch: Sitting Pretty

Good posture boosts energy!

You may think it's more comfortable and restful to slouch while using your keyboard or to lean on your desk with your elbows while reading. But in the long run, it isn't.

In fact, poor posture, the stress of leaning over paperwork and straining to peer at computer screens may eventually cause muscle tension, stiffness, backaches, neck cramps, and fatigue. Such habits can even lead to more serious problems, such as spine disorders or pinched nerves.

Posture problems.

Slouching can overstretch the ligaments that support your spine. Cradling a telephone receiver between your head and shoulder can give you a stiff, sore neck. Sitting in one position for long periods can reduce circulation in your muscles, increasing fatigue and stiffness and setting you up for injury.

The Principles of Good Posture.

Here are the major components of healthy-and energizing-posture:

Whether sitting or standing, keep your ears, shoulders and hips "stacked" in a straight line to keep the natural curves of your spine in their normal, balanced alignment.

Adjust your chair height so that your feet are flat on the floor or on a foot stool. Avoid crossing your legs. Slide your chair under your desk so you won't have to lean too far forward. If your chair is at a comfortable height, your knees will be level with or slightly lower than your hips. Support your lower back with the back of your chair. For additional support sit using a cushion, lumbar roll or rolled up towel and place it in the small of your back.

Place books and papers you read or type from in a book stand or document holder the same distance from you as your computer screen. Make sure such documents and your computer screen are at or slightly below eye level.

Do not cradle the telephone receiver between your head and shoulder, use a headset or speakerphone or simply hold it to your ear with your hand.

Stretch about once an hour. Avoid staying in one position for hours at a time. Stand up, breathe deeply, stretch and shake out the kinks. Just a few minutes an hour should stimulate circulation and keep you limber.

You may accomplish a lot at work despite bad posture, but you'll get a surprising energy boost and be able to accomplish even more when you practice good posture. And good posture applies not only sitting, but also while standing, bending, lifting, or reaching. Good posture contributes to deep breathing, healthy organ function and good circulation-all great energy boosters. It may take a little practice, but the return in comfort and energy will go a long way toward helping you look and feel your best.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail <mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil>, telephone 202/762-3218 (DSN 762-3218), or fax 202/762-3224.